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121 But I have used illustrative material from other villages where it was more complete or less confusing. In Appendices, I set out genealogies, hut censuses, and plans, of the two villages. In the text I use reference numbers in these genealogies, by generation and position in generations, to identify people.

It is necessary to select illustrations because the structural uniformities I wish to describe are often hidden by the idiosyncrasies of particular examples. The general principles of social structure, as I present them here, have been abstracted from my observations over a period of two years, not only in Cikoja and Ali Kasunka villages, but in many others in the Machinga area. I present my illustrations not with any belief that they prove my analysis, but only to help the reader set the principles I describe in the reality of Yao life.

The Field Work

123 I spent the first two weeks of my stay in Nyasaland talking over my proposed field work with the Administrative officers of the Nyasaland Government. The Provincial Commissioner suggested that I should do a round trip of the Yao area with the District Commissioner at Zomba. After this tour, in consultation with Chief Kawinga and the District Commissioner, I decided that the best place for me to start would be in Chief Chiwalo's area. The District Commissioner then took me to Chiwalo who indicated a site in his court-village where I could pitch my tent.

124 For the first week I held meetings with the chief and some of the elder men of the vicinity and spent most of my time making notes on material culture, 'customs' and history. On the first page of my notes I find that there is a good description of Yao beliefs in sorcery, all described as if it were in the past: a full year was to pass before my informants were prepared to admit that these beliefs were still held. After a week or two of this
123 general activity I decided to try my first village census. The
125 results were hardly encouraging. Often when villagers knew
203 I was coming they slipped away into the bush. Those who were left frequently refused steadfastly to answer my questions. Many rumours arose to explain my presence. I heard, for example, that I had been sent by the Government to record the names of those to be taken away as soldiers for the next

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war. I heard that I was an American spy, and also that I was a spy for the Portuguese, because Nyasaland, or at least the Yao area of it, was going to become part of Mozambique. I spent much of my enforced idleness during these early months copying down texts in Yao from my clerk and translating them into English.

Towards the end of 1946, when the rains had set in, I decided to move into a vacant house on a tobacco market about five miles from where I had first pitched my tent. I then started to make a census of the nearest village. Here the attitude of the people was markedly different and I established friendly and happy relationships with them. For some weeks I systematically made censuses of the surrounding villages, and got my first insight into the structural principles of Yao villages. I left this area to attend a conference of research officers of the Institute, and when I returned I pitched my tent in the village into which my personal servant had married. By this time I was speaking some of the language and had started to talk to people directly. I now began to establish a set of informants who would come to my tent in the afternoons and dictate texts to me in Yao on various topics of interest, which I immediately translated into English. The mornings I spent out in neighbouring villages. It was during this period that I gradually heard about the various ceremonies that were being performed and was able to attend them. My wife too was able to attend some of the women's ceremonies. Some months later I moved down to Kawinga's area and pitched my tent in one of the largest and most complex villages I could find and made a complete census of it. I chose this village so that it would be sufficiently close for me to attend Kawinga's court, which was the largest in the area. I left the field in September 1947, and in September 1948 returned to Chiwalo's village. I now engaged a new clerk who could speak no English and who came from the village in Chiwalo's area where I had originally settled. During my second trip I visited Jalasi, Katuli and Kalembo chiefdoms, all in different parts of the Yao country, and made village censuses in each.

The procedure I adopted in making village censuses was as follows. Usually I visited the headman a day or so in advance to explain my intention to him. Most of the villages I studied were fairly close to that in which I was camped so that the people

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knew as a rule what information I wanted. On an appointed day I went to the village in the early morning. My first task was to make a rough sketch of the position of the huts and to number them. Then with the aid of some of the men of the village (who were usually the wardens of sorority-groups) I went from hut to hut completing a Rhodes-Livingstone Institute standard census form for each adult person who lived in the hut. Later I found that if I completed the census forms for certain key personalities who were dead, I could sometimes construct most of the genealogy of the village without having to question the headman any further. More commonly, however, especially in the larger and more complex villages, I found that it was necessary for me to meet the headman and some of the older men afterwards to complete the genealogy of the village. When I did this it was customary for the men of the village to gather in the common shelter or around me under the verandah of the hut where I was working. The women were not invited near, at least at the beginning of the interview. Soon, however, the men became more and more confused. At some stage or other they would begin shouting questions over to the women, who were sitting discreetly under the verandah of an adjoining hut or in the shade of a conveniently close tree, from where they could hear the proceedings. Eventually, almost without fail, the older women were brought closer and the difficulties straightened out. In time I became accustomed to this procedure and accepted the fact that the first genealogy would have to be discarded and a second made later with the help of the women.

It was during the house-to-house census that many valuable leads emerged. During the census-taking, for example, unusual types of marriage with kinsmen appeared which I was able to follow up immediately in terms of an actual case history; or, if it were likely to be embarrassing at that moment, I noted it down and made specific enquiries later, for the census-taking was usually done in public.

The quantitative material presented in Chapter IV on Prestige and Rank among Village Headmen was collected at the chief's courts. I worked with the chief's tax-clerk and one or two of the chief's councillors. We worked through the tax-register, and the councillors answered a set of questions about each village headman. In two areas the chiefs called the village head-

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Often there is some cultural obstruction to the giving of information of certain types. The Yao, for example, will not readily mention the names of deceased persons. Often young children or people who themselves had no children are completely forgotten. Many polygynous men cannot remember the number of children that they have fathered.

Nevertheless, in spite of these and other similar difficulties, some investigators have been able to publish a certain amount of material bearing on the problem of the rate of increase of non-literate populations in Africa. All of them have been based on samples, though none of these could be considered statistically representative. Such studies in recent years include one in Southern Nigeria,[1] one from Tanganyika[2] based on a substantial sample of women, while M. Fortes has published some material on the Tallensi of the Gold Coast.[3] Schapera, incidentally to a larger study, has published some material on the Tswana of Bechuanaland Protectorate.[4]

The analysis of the Yakö by Enid Charles and C. Daryll Forde was mainly concerned with the calculation of the male net reproduction-rate, while the Culwicks and Schapera calculated female net reproduction-rates. Fortes considered both the male and female net reproduction-rates. The Culwicks have so far presented the most complete analysis of this type of material but were not able to classify their material into five- or ten-year age-groups, though they did use a wider age classification. The Culwicks, Fortes, and Schapera have all used the number of girls born to women now past child-bearing as an estimate of the female gross reproduction-rate. There are objections to this procedure which are outlined below.

In this paper an attempt is made to present in more detail some demographic material on an African non-literate people. The main object of the paper is to estimate the probable gross and net reproduction-rates prevailing at the moment in the areas studied. The data on which this paper is based were collected incidentally to a study of the social organization of the Yao people living in the Liwonde District of Nyasaland in Central Africa.[5] In this study a number of typical hamlets, varying from 5 to 50 or more dwellings, were visited and genealogies of the residents recorded. In 20 of these hamlets further details were secured on points of demographic interest. Each census in a village took a day or two, and individual censuses were taken between November 1946 and March 1947. In this analysis of the material I have assumed that the survey was done at the end of 1946. The survey was conducted on a *de facto* and *de jure* basis in that the population who had slept in a hamlet the previous night was enumerated, but the mobility of the population is so high that usually it was necessary to consider a *de jure* census as constituting the true population of the village. The twenty hamlets studied were grouped in three areas, two in the area under N. A. Kawinga and one in N. A. Nyambi's area.

[1] Enid Charles and C. Daryll Forde, "Notes on Some Population Data from a Southern Nigerian Village", *The Sociological Review*, vol. xxxi, no. 2 (April 1938).

[2] A. T. and G. M. Culwick, "A Study of Population in Ulanga, Tanganyika Territory", *The Sociological Review*, vol. xxxi, no. 2 (1938), p. 362, and vol. xxxii (1939), no. 1, p. 25.

[3] M. Fortes, "A Note on the Fertility among the Tallensi of the Gold Coast", *The Sociological Review*, vol. xxxiii, no. 2 (July-Oct. 1941).

[4] I. Schapera, *Migrant Labour and Tribal Life*, London: Oxford University Press (1947), pp. 208ff.

[5] This study was conducted as part of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute's comparative study of the social organization of some Central African tribes. I am grateful to the Trustees of the Institute and to the Director, Dr. E. Colson, who have given me permission to publish this material.

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They do not form a representative sample though they were casually selected for study and are fairly well scattered in the district in which they are situated.

In all there were 762 men, women, and children normally resident in the hamlets. This represents about 1·1 per cent. of the total population of the area. By normally resident, I mean that these people are considered to be members of the hamlets, and if they were absent, were away on only short visits of, say, about a month.

I have thus counted polygynists as normal members of the hamlets, but have taken care to ensure that they were not included again if their second wives were in another hamlet of the groups studied. Men, women, and their children who had gone outside the area to seek work, for example, were not included.

The ages of all members of the population were estimated by relating the birth of the individual to some notable event, the date of which is known. In these hamlets it was always possible to find some old relative who could place the birth of younger people as occurring between notable events. After the two dates between which the birth occurred had been fixed, it was then possible to fix the date of birth more accurately by asking the older people to indicate the approximate size of the child at subsequent events, by picking out a suitably sized child in the village.

The following is the skeleton chronology used in this survey.

1870 Migration of Kawinga group from Kongwe Hill.
1881 First attack by the Malwangwara Angoni.
1884 Second attack by the Malwangwara Angoni.
1895 British attack on Mount Chikala, the stronghold of Kawinga.
1896 British attack on Mount Mangoche, the stronghold of Jalasi.
1903 Death of Kawinga of the Amhill.
1907 The departure of Mr. Hoare, Collector of Revenue, from the Chikala Station.
1908 Small-pox epidemic.
1913 Government regulations about the number of huts to a village (District Administration (Natives) Ordinance, 1912).
1914 Commencement of the First World War. This is a notable event because of the fighting in German East Africa, in which many Nyasaland African troops took part. Also many men were used as porters carrying war goods from the railhead to Fort Johnston on Lake Nyasa.
1918 End of First World War.
1919 Influenza epidemic.
1921 General famine. This is known locally as *nala wa Jim*, lit. 'the hunger of Jim'. Jim was an African Government clerk whose duty it was to dispense food to the starving populace.
1930 The coming of the famous *mchape* witch-finders. These people, trading on the beliefs of the populations, induced practically the entire people to drink a potion to prevent themselves from witchcraft. It is a most memorable event in the history of the area.*
1933 The introduction of Indirect Rule.
1940 The commencement of recruiting for the Second World War. The Liwonde district supplied a good proportion of men for the Army.
1946 End of the Second World War, i.e. the return of the soldiers.

The important thing about such a chronology is that the events should be deeply

* For details of this movement where it had penetrated to Northern Rhodesia, see A. I. Richards, 'A Modern Movement of Witch-finders', *Africa*, vol. viii (1935), pp. 448–61.

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impressed on people's memories and remembered by most of the people. There is was desirable to find a useful reference date between 1930 and 1940. It might be thought that the death of King George V would be memorable. However, though all who were old enough at the time could remember the watchfulness, only a few could remember the death of King George.

This skeleton chronology was filled in by events of more local significance. For example, Kawinga's brick house was built in 1929, the present Nyambi succeeded in 1933, &c. In addition, in particular hamlets there were men who had been in the Army, or had been to work in South Africa or Southern Rhodesia. Usually they could recall the date of going and sometimes of return, though they may have lost count of the intervening years. Such dates were often useful points. A small minority had actually recorded the dates of birth and death of children.

In addition to this, it was possible to fix the ages of the young children by reference to harvests, since the Yao reckon two years in retrospect, 'last year' running before the last harvest and 'the year before last' running the period before the harvest before last. Before the year before last, all time is merely *kale-kale*, the only indication of the period being the pitch of the voice in which it is said or the presence or absence of an exclamatory 'E!' before speaking.

Particular care was taken to secure the ages of women and the dates at which they had borne children. There was, as mentioned above, some reticence in mentioning the names of dead children, but this was usually got successfully by questioning the women's male relatives who were generally more communicative on these points. In spite of the care taken to obtain this information, it was impossible to fix the ages of six women in the sample, and they have been excluded from the major part of the analysis. In addition, there were thirty-nine men who were not available for questioning. These were all adults, the husbands of women in the hamlets. The Yao are matrilineal and matrilocal, and men tend to spend much of their time away from the hamlet of their relatives-in-law. Since they are in many ways strangers in the hamlets no information could be obtained about them.

2. The General Background to Fertility

All the hamlets visited were occupied by members of the Yao tribe. The Yao are an Islamized people who achieved the questionable distinction of being efficient slave raiders at the end of the nineteenth century. They are a matrilineal and predominantly matrilocal people living in hamlets of from about 5 to 100 huts or more.

Table I. *Age of Women at First Marriage*

Age	Age of women at first marriage													
	10–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	18–19	20–21	22–23	24–25	26–27	28–29	30–31	32–33		
Under 30	1	8	1	18	9	6	1	1	...	...	...	...	55	18·7
30–45	6	6	1	11	2	6	1	1	...	1	1	...	36	18·3
Over 45	...	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	...	1	...	...	10	18·6
Totals	7	15	3	30	13	15	3	3	...	2	1	...	101	17·9